



Department of Defense

DIRECTIVE

NUMBER 5410.1
May 14, 2004

ASD(PA)

SUBJECT: Release of Information Concerning Accidental Casualties Involving Military Personnel or Equipment

References: (a) DoD Directive 5410.1, subject as above, September 27, 1973 (hereby canceled)

1. PURPOSE

This Directive reissues reference (a) to continue the establishment of uniform DoD policy for the release of information concerning military personnel involved in accidents. Additionally, it establishes approval authority for release of casualty information concerning key U.S. and foreign government personnel when the U.S. military is the responsible agency.

2. APPLICABILITY

The provisions of this Directive apply to the Military Departments. The terms "Military Service" or "Services" as used herein refer to the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Marine Corps.

3. POLICY

It is DoD policy that the Military Services adhere to the policy set forth below.

3.1. Accidents Within Armed Forces Installations. In all cases of accidents within the confines of installations of the Armed Forces:

3.1.1. Public release of names of killed or injured military personnel should be withheld until such time as the next-of-kin can reasonably be expected to have received the official notification of the accident.

3.1.2. Every effort should be made, however, to release such names simultaneously with, or as soon thereafter as possible, the release of accident news itself, so as to remove or lessen the anxiety of relatives of other personnel on the installation.

3.2. Accidents Outside Armed Forces Installations. In all cases of accidents outside the confines of installations of the Armed Forces:

3.2.1. If military personnel figure in accidents involving civilian or military automobiles, trains, commercial or private airplanes, or in any other type of accident, with the exception of subparagraph 3.2.3., the names of the military personnel should be released to competent authorities immediately upon identification. Every effort should be made to notify next-of-kin prior to public release.

3.2.2. If the accidents involve military airplanes that crash in or upon the borders of cities or towns, or that cause civilian casualties or appreciable damage to property--that is, if there has been a major invasion of the civilian domain--the names of the military personnel should be released immediately upon notification of next-of-kin after delaying a reasonable time for such notification; if classified equipment is involved, normal security precautions should be observed with respect to the equipment.

3.2.3. If the accidents involve military airplanes that crash in localities remote from populated areas, involve no civilian casualties, and cause no appreciable property damage -- that is, if there has been no major invasion of the civilian domain--names of the military personnel should be withheld until such time as the next-of-kin can reasonably be expected to have received official notification of the accident.

3.3. Release Of Casualty Information About Key United States And Foreign Government Personnel. Because of national and international interest and implications, the release of casualty information concerning key U.S. Government personnel or equivalent-rank foreign government visitors shall be carefully coordinated. Casualty information on key personnel as designated below when killed, injured or listed as missing while on a military installation or being transported by military vehicle shall be directed to the following offices for public announcement:

3.3.1. The White House Press Secretary shall have sole approval authority for release of news regarding:

3.3.1.1. The President of the United States.

3.3.1.2. The Vice President of the United States.

3.3.1.3. The Speaker of the House of Representatives.

3.3.1.4. The President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

3.3.1.5. Members of the Cabinet.

3.3.1.6. Foreign visitors of political or royal rank equivalent to the above list of U.S. Government officials.

3.3.1.7. Any members of foreign governments below the rank of the preceding category, but guests of the United States and chiefs of foreign military services who are United States guests.

3.3.2. The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) shall approve the release of news regarding:

3.3.2.1. U.S. Senators.

3.3.2.2. U.S. Representatives.

3.3.2.3. Secretaries of the Military Departments.

3.3.2.4. The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

3.3.2.5. The Chief of Staff, U.S. Army.

3.3.2.6. The Chief of Naval Operations.

3.3.2.7. The Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force.

3.3.2.8. The Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps.

3.3.2.9. The Commanders of the Combatant Commands.

3.3.3. The Military Departments shall be the approving authority for release of information concerning U.S. military personnel when casualty reporting falls within their zone of responsibility.


3.3.4. Accidents involving military officers in the grade of O-9 or above or civilians of equivalent rank shall be handled by the Services concerned under the provisions of their existing regulations; however, the Directorate for Press Operations, OASD(PA), (703-697-5131) shall be informed of the accident prior to release.

3.3.5. In those cases covered by subparagraphs 3.3.3. and 3.3.4., above, the Military Services may authorize local information officers to release information prior to notification of the ASD(PA) in response to specific queries from the press concerning individuals by name. However, every effort shall be made to affect immediate notification of the ASD(PA).

3.3.6. Accidents occurring outside of the United States shall require additional coordination with the U.S. Embassy/Consulate to insure proper notification to the host government.

4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Directive is effective immediately.



Paul Wolfowitz
Deputy Secretary of Defense